

Asheville Area Riverfront Redevelopment Commission Meeting

February 27, 2014

Location: Asheville City Hall 6th Floor Training Room

Member Attendees: Chair Pattiy Torno; Vice Chair Stephanie Brown; Buncombe County Commissioner David King; Woodfin Mayor Jerry Vebaun; Joe Ferikes; Pam Turner; Carleton Collins; Peter Sprague; Karl Koon; Cindy Weeks; George Morosani; Dan Hitchcock

Absent from meeting: Asheville City Mayor Esther Manheimer ; Ricky Silver

Staff: Cathy Ball; Stephanie Monson; Shannon Capezzali

Other attendees: Asheville City Councilperson Gwen Wisler; Kate O'Hara; Tom Gallaher; Mark Allison; Stuart Cowles;

Chair Pattiy Torno opened the meeting at 4:02 pm.

ADMINISTRATIVE:

- The meeting has a quorum.
- A motion was made by Koon to adopt the January minutes. Seconded by Ferikes. The motion passed unanimously.

UPDATES:

Ad Hoc Subcommittees

- Bylaws Subcommittee – The AARRC bylaws have been revised to accommodate the transfer of the River District Design Review Committee functions to the Planning and Design Review committee of the AARRC. Changes also occurred to the Standing Committee and Nominating Committee sections.
 - A motion to approve the Bylaw revisions as submitted was made by Vebaun. Seconded by Hitchcock. The motion passed unanimously.
- Nominating Subcommittee – Pattiy Torno provided an update on the nominations for the new design review committee. Carleton Collins was appointed as the AARRC's new design professional seat by City Council at their January 14, 2014 meeting and so shall serve as the committee Chair. Dan Hitchcock and Cindy Weeks will serve as the other two member appointees. For the remaining non AARRC seats, the nomination committee recommends appointing architect Mark Allison who has served on the RDDRC; and landscape architect Matt Sprouse of Sitework Studios.
 - A motion to approve the nominations was made by King. Seconded by Ferikes. The motion passed unanimously.
- Design Review Subcommittee – Carleton Collins provided an update on the Design Review subcommittee. No formal submissions have been received for review, but a level 1 review for Catawba Brewing is expected soon. Subcommittee meetings occur on the first Wednesday of every Month beginning in April 2014.

- Networking Subcommittee – Peter Sprague provided an update on the networking subcommittee which meets the first Monday of every month, alternating between the Morosani offices and Mountain Housing Opportunities. Next month's meeting will be at 4pm at MHO. Subcommittee members have found that one property owner that was to be contacted is undergoing business changes and another is out of town for most of the year making it difficult to engage the owners. The Subcommittee is participating in four new initiatives:
 - Members attended the city staff's January 15 Riverside Drive Development Plan work session, and the February 5 Economic Development Incentives policy review group. They are looking for assistance in identifying property owners who might be open to investment partnerships. AARRC members will attend future meetings of both groups.
 - Members will also attend the City's Riverfront open office hours event which occurs on the third Thursday of every month.
 - On January 30, Cindy Weeks attended a public meeting at All Souls Cathedral where Stacey Merten provided an update on the City's historic plan. The river district is one of the focus areas where historic structures will be identified for potential preservation. Stephanie Monson stated that the committee could consider the value of a variety of historic and cultural resources due to their ability to strengthen and enhance the character and value of the area. Stephanie Brown stated that the members should consider whether a structure is structurally sound or whether costly interventions would be needed to stabilize it. Tom Gallaher stated that the 20% NC historic tax credit will expire at the end of this year.
 - Torno requests that AARRC members consider the top three to five structures, cultural landscapes, or sites that should be preserved and provide that information at the March AARRC meeting where Stacey Merten will be giving a presentation. Collins stated that the Design Review committee would discuss criteria for inclusion in the historic preservation list.
 - On February 20, Cindy Weeks attended Riverfront open office hours. Information was presented by Dawa Hitch on the City's website Project Pages which highlight major investments. This information could be added to the networking subcommittee's information package for property owners. Stephanie Monson requested that Committee members consider what project pages they would like to see and provide that information to Dawa Hitch at the next AARRC meeting.
 - The networking Subcommittee would like to make contact with the new owners of the Slosman Building.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Stephanie Monson provided an update on the East of the Riverway / TIGER II Deliverables process. Tom Gallaher is the lead consultant for the Riverside Drive Development Plan. On March 18, 2014 a public wrap-up meeting will be held for the current East of the RiverWay projects to highlight how the communities input has guided the consultant's recommendations for Council. As funding remains from the grant, staff are working on phase II of the grant which

includes a RFP for a gentrification study, which should be released in March, and funds to create construction drawings for the renovation of 14 Riverside Drive. A consultant will be hired for around \$25,000 to complete the gentrification study by October, which will include an analysis of local trends, national comparison, interviews with stakeholders and public engagement, and recommendations to council. The purpose of the study is to determine if the community- including the public, private and non for profit sectors- can better address the negative impacts of gentrification – the displacement of people, important economic sectors, or other community resources due to rising costs.

- Stuart Cowles, from the Smokey Mountain Adventure Center presented information about his new commercial/recreational development which is being constructed on Amboy Road between the French Broad River Park and the Karen Cragolin Park. The structure will include a juice and coffee bar, balcony overlooking the river, climbing facility, yoga rooms and community space, and kiosks to rent canoes, bikes, and other outdoor amenities. The building has been designed specifically to address potential flooding with hurricane style flood gates and reinforced walls. 23 parking spaces will be required. Completion is expected around summer of 2014. Monson stated that the city is considering the installation of a crosswalk near the development, which would require a partnership with NCDOT.
- Cathy Ball, the City's Assistant City Manager, provided information about the Duke donation of the French Broad River Greenway connection which spans from the New Belgium property to the north end of the French Broad River Park. Council approved an agreement to transfer 48 acres of property to the City for the construction of a multi-use transportation and recreation corridor. Money is available in the current year's budget to begin design work, with construction expected to be complete within three years. The design may include a 14 foot asphalt path with striped double bike lanes for commuters and a pedestrian lane. The City of Asheville would maintain the vegetation on the property and in Duke easements.
- Stephanie Monson provided an update on the redevelopment of 14 Riverside Drive included the current preferred building design which includes a large outdoor deck, public restrooms, and flexible space for rentals such as vendor space, performances, weddings, and other events. The building has been neglected for over 40 years, has no functional roof, and is in a flood hazard area, among other challenges. The City is allocating between \$20 to \$50,000 for design, with the full construction costs expected to be around \$450,000. The City will manage the public restroom space but the flexible rental space will be contracted to a vendor to maintain and program. The RFP will be released in two weeks.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Commissioners discussed recent real estate transactions in the area and the issue of creating railroad quiet-zones throughout the City.
- The May 20 Commission retreat will be rescheduled. Date to be determined.

Meeting adjourned at 5:27pm. The next meeting of the AARRC will be March 13, 2014 at 4:00 pm in the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce Board Room.